Vacations in court

753. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that civil courts in lower Judiciary combined with High Courts and Supreme Court are the only constitutional institutions to observe summer and winter vacations;

(b) whether it is also a fact that hundreds of thousands of court cases are pending and that their number shows no signs of abating;

(c) whether in view of (a) and (b) above, Government would consider to put an end to the colonial practice of courts observing summer vacations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (d) The working days in the Supreme Court and High Courts are regulated by the rules framed by the respective Courts. According to available information, the Supreme Court of India works for 222 days in a year; all High Courts in the country normally have 210 working days in a year and the number of working days of the District/Subordinate Courts are regulated by the concerned High Court.

The question of curtailing/discontinuing the vacations in the Courts has been considered in the past, but it has not been found feasible or advisable to do so because of the taxing nature of work of the Judiciary and the Bar. The Department of Justice in July 2001 had invited the views of the High Courts regarding the number of working days in the High Courts and the curtailment of their vacations. Replies were received from 14 High Courts. The High Court of Uttaranchal increased the number of its working days in a year from 210 to 224 and the High Court of karnataka from 210 to 214. Jharkhand High Court had no objection to increase the number of working days. Other High Courts had not favoured increase in the number of their working days in a year.

In view of the urgent need of the hour to reduce the huge pendencies prevailing in the High Courts, this Department addressed to all the High Courts, requesting them to fix the period of vacations in such a way that the number of working days of High Courts generally do not fall below 222 days in a year.

Various other steps have been taken by the Government-to expedite disposal of cases, these include periodically monitoring the pendency position in courts, grouping of cases involving common question of law, constitution of specialized benches, timely filling up the vacancies of judges, increasing the judge strength, organizing Lok Adalats at regular intervals, encouraging alternative modes of disputes resolution like negotiation, mediation and arbitration and setting up of special tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunals, State Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunals, Family Courts, Labour Courts etc.

Royalty on ores

†754. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the royalty being provided for coal and iron ore, separately;

(b) since when this rate is applicable and the year of its last revision;

(c) the authority responsible for determining these rates and whether Government propose to increase them further in present perspective; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Rates of royalty of major minerals are specified in the Second Schedule of Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act). Rates of royalty on coal produced in all States and Union Territories except the state of West Bengal are as under:

1. Group I Coals.	Rs. 250 per tonne.
2. Group II Coals.	Rs. 165 per tonne.
3. Group III Coals.	Rs. 115 per tonne.
4. Group IV Coals.	Rs. 85 per tonne.
5. Group V Coals.	Rs. 65 per tonne.
6. Group VI Coals.	Rs. 90 per tonne.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.